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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2006

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**TURLOCK MAN INDICTED FOR RECEIPT AND
POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

FRESNO-- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a two-count indictment, yesterday, charging MICHAEL GENE BALL, JR., 21, of Turlock, California with receiving and possessing child pornography. The indictment alleges that on or about October 12, 2006, BALL received and was in possession of images involving the sexual exploitation of minors.

BALL was arrested in the late afternoon on October 26, 2006.

According to court documents previously filed in this case, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began its investigation when information was received from Postal Inspectors with the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) that BALL was attempting to purchase child pornography. Following a consensual search of BALL's computer hard drive, a state search warrant was executed on the computer hard drive on October 16, 2006. Forensic examination revealed numerous images of child pornography contained on BALL's computer hard drive and CD's.

This case is the product of an extensive joint investigation by the FBI, USPIS, and the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department as a part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). Project Safe Childhood is a United States Department of Justice initiative established to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children, and to reduce the number of internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with state and local agencies and organizations to increase law enforcement presence on the internet, and to educate the public and children of safe internet use, thereby reducing the chance they may fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafechildhood.gov or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Sherrill A. Carvalho, who is prosecuting the case, if convicted of the charges as alleged in the indictment, BALL faces up to 20 years imprisonment and a mandatory minimum of 5 years imprisonment for receipt of material involving

the sexual exploitation of minors. Possession of child pornography is punishable for up to 10 years in prison. Both offenses provide for a possible lifetime term of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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